



For Immediate Release

Easton, MD – February 15, 2023

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Talbot County Council Meeting Highlights, Tuesday, February 14, 2023

These highlights only reflect the business items covered from the Council's approved agenda. To view the complete County Council meeting, please visit: Talbot County Meeting Videos - Talbot County, Maryland (www.talbotcountymd.gov).

Update to Board of Health – Dr. Maria Maguire, Talbot County Health Officer – Dr. Maguire provided statistical information on the demographics of Talbot County citizens compared with other citizens in the state of Maryland by age, ethnicity, average household income, disability, etc., health behaviors of both groups by life expectancy, teen birth rate, smoking, obesity, Emergency Room visits for diabetes, excessive drinking, and that the leading causes of death for Talbot County residents are heart issues, cancer and accidents. She then briefed the Council on the following: (1) Opioid Epidemic – fatal overdoses declined 15% in Talbot County between September 2021 and September 2022; non-fatal overdoses declined by 65% during the same period. Dr. Maguire stated that initial funding in the sum of \$60 million from the Opioid Restitution Fund (ORF), created in 2019 to receive funds awarded to the State of Maryland from legal settlements with prescription opioid manufacturers and distributors began to be distributed in 2022; a total of \$400 million is anticipated over the 18 years; and (2) Behavioral Health Services – New providers for substance abuse and mental health care to both adults and children, and crisis bed services, are coming to Talbot County to replace services lost when Eastern Shore Psychological Services closed in fall 2022. Dr. Maguire provided updates on on-going and recent public health emergencies including Monkeypox (Mpox); the downward trend of COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations, and deaths; and the respiratory illnesses of influenza and RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus). Free Flu shots are available Monday through Friday from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the Talbot County Covid/Vaccine Center, 102 Marlboro Ave., Easton; walk-ins are welcome. She noted that February is American Heart Month, stating that 80% of heart disease and stroke can be prevented by choosing foods that are heart-healthy, participating in regular physical activity, getting enough sleep, and managing stress. Resources for managing heart health may be found at <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/education/american-heart-month> and <https://www.livetothebeat.org/>.

Update by Talbot County Department of Economic Development & Tourism – Ken Kozel, Chair, Talbot County Economic Development Commission; Judy Bixler, Chair, Talbot

County Tourism Board; Cassandra Vanhooser, Director, Talbot County Department of Economic Development & Tourism – Ms. Vanhooser outlined the Vision, Mission and Value of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism to Talbot County and briefed the Council on additional resources provided to the department during the Pandemic, including funding for from the Maryland Rural Economic Development Fund; the EDA (Economic Development Administration) Grant for Eastern Shore Recovery Project; and ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act of 2021) funding for Broadband. She also presented a summary of the number of clients from Talbot County referred to the Small Business Development Center, a state program that Talbot County partially funds. She outlined the distribution of \$10 million in funding provided to the Mid-Shore Regional Council as part the \$50 million included in Governor Hogan’s 2022 Budget for the five regional councils throughout the state. Talbot County received \$3.233 million which funded 14 projects, 5 of which were County projects. Ms. Vanhooser also reviewed results of the initial Eastern Shore Business Sentiment Survey, a twice yearly survey of Eastern Shore businesses conducted by economic development organizations in all nine counties on the Eastern Shore. Results from the December 2022 survey cited respondents’ top three concerns as payroll/benefits; fuel/transportation; and utilities costs; respondents also expressed optimism toward the continued success or expansion of their businesses over the next five years. Ms. Vanhooser highlighted the success of the recent Business Resource Fair held on January 21; the first of three “Let’s Talk Business” speaker series events; the March 6 speaker for the series is Ken Kozel, President & CEO, University of Maryland Medical System Shore Regional Health; the speaker for the April 3 event is Dick Willey, former president, Perdue AgriBusiness, LLC – Perdue Farms, Inc. Ms. Vanhooser concluded her presentation by stating that her office has relaunched the *TourTalbot.org* website and is relaunching the Frederick Douglass website in February; flag raising ceremony and ribbon cutting at the Frederick Douglass Mural on the Easton Rail Trail will take place on Saturday, February 18 at 3:00 p.m.

Introduction of Administrative Resolution:

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOLUTION REPEALING ENFORCEMENT RESOLUTION – COVID-19 – ADOPTED AUGUST 25, 2020 was introduced and unanimously approved by all Council members. County Attorney Patrick Thomas noted that the Administrative Resolution formally appeals the Administrative Resolution entitled, “Enforcement Resolution COVID-19” adopted by the County Council on August 25, 2020 in its entirety as it is no longer in force and effect now that the State of Maryland’s Executive Order No. 21-05-14-01 is no longer in effect.

County Manager’s Report –

- Board and Committee Appointments
 - Board of Appeals – Mr. Stamp requested the reappointment of Zakary Krebeck and Greg Gannon (alternate member) to the Board of Appeals. The request was unanimously approved by the Council.
 - Emergency Services Advisory Board – Mr. Stamp requested the reappointment of Terry Satchell (Easton District) and Ruth Sullivan (Trappe District) to the Emergency Services Advisory Board. The request was unanimously approved by the Council.

- Local Emergency Planning Committee – Mr. Stamp requested approval to forward the name of Commissioner Michael Sullivan, Town of Trappe, to the Governor for consideration of appointment to the Local Emergency Planning Committee. The request was unanimously approved by the Council.
- Police Accountability Board – Mr. Stamp requested the appointment of Gagy Irving, III to the Police Accountability Board as a representative of the Town of Oxford and surrounding community. The request was unanimously approved by the Council.
- Ethics Commission – Mr. Stamp requested approval the appointment of Dr. James Bell to the Ethics Commission. The request was unanimously approved by the Council.
- Request from Department of Corrections to Utilize FY23 Contingency Funds to Replace HVAC Condenser Coils – Council unanimously approved the request from the Department of Corrections to utilize \$31,804 in FY23 contingency funds to repair HVAC condenser coils at the Detention Center. Martha Sparks, Finance Director, confirmed there are sufficient contingency funds for this purpose.
- Request from Hog Neck Golf Course for Fee Increases for 2023 Season – Council unanimously approved the 2023 Daily Fee Golf Rates and annual rates as recommended by the Golf Board.
- Request from Hog Neck Golf Course - Recommendation to Award Golf Course Equipment Lease – Council unanimously approved the request from Hog Neck Golf Course to enter into a lease agreement with Finch Turf Equipment (John Deere) to begin in November 2023. A total of three quotes were received with Finch Turf Equipment being the lowest. The new lease agreement is a fair market value lease for a term of 60 months in the amount of \$369,859.40. The golf course is requesting approval now as there is a lead time on ordering equipment.
- Request from Hog Neck Golf Course – Recommendation to Award Contract for Golf Course Parking Lot Lighting – Council unanimously approved the request from Hog Neck Golf Course to enter into a contract with Musco Sports Lighting, Inc. in the amount of \$83,707 to install parking lot lighting. The project will repurpose nine (9), 30-ft. light poles from the Talbot County Business Center property. The Golf Course has FY23 budgeted funds of \$75,000 for the project and can absorb the overage in their budget and by assisting with trenching for lights.
- Request from County Facilities – *Recommendation to Award Bid No. 22-03, Reroofing of Sections of the Talbot County Circuit Courthouse Roof, 11 North Washington Street, Easton – Talbot County, Maryland* – Council unanimously approved the award of Bid No. 22-03 and Add Alternate #1 to the low bidder, A.K.J. of Stevensville, Maryland in the sum of \$232,500 contingent on permit approval from the Town of Easton. A total of five bids were submitted. Additionally, Council approved the award of Add Alternate #2 (repainting of dome roof on Courthouse) to A.K.J. in the amount of \$14,750. There are sufficient funds in the FY23 budget for both projects.
- Request from Department of Public Works – *Recommendation to Award Bid No. 22-17, Talbot County Free Library – Easton Branch - Audio/Visual Equipment and Installation (Auditorium Main Meeting Room/Frederick Douglass Room) - Easton - Talbot County, Maryland* – Council unanimously approved the award of Bid No. 22-17 to the low bidder, Daly Computers, Inc. in the amount of \$85,048. A total of two bids were received. There are sufficient funds in the FY23 budget for this project.

The County Council's next legislative meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 28th beginning at 6:00 p.m. The Council will be convening at 3:00 p.m. for a Work Session with Easton Utilities for an update on the Connect Talbot Project. The Work Session will be held in the Bradley Meeting Room and is open to the public.

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.